A

Modest Survey

Of the most considerable things

IN A

DISCOURSE

Lately Published, Entitled

NAKED TRUTH.

Written in a Letter to a Friend.

The Second Edition.

Imprimatur, *G. Jane. May* 26. 1676.

LONDON,
Printed for *Moses Pitt*, at the Sign of the Angel in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1676.

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SIR,

YOu have made use of your Authority over me in a particular, that nothing under that absolute power you have with me, could have prevailed: To give you an account of my sence of that Discourse that has of late made so much noise, Entitled *Naked Truth*, chiefly in what he says, concerning *Bishops and Priests*. If I were only to discharge my thoughts into the Bosom of so Generous and Worthy a Friend, I could easily have resolved on it: But you insinuated a Design of making a more publick use of what I might write about it, And this raised a mutiny in my thoughts, which could not be soon subdued into a compliance with so uneasie a task. Others have already animadverted upon that Discourse with great advantages of Wit and Learning; But I not being born under such happy Stars, do expose my self much, in hazarding to write, both after such Pens, and about a Book that has had the luck to be much read, and by some no less commended. It may therefore seem great presumption in me to interpose in such a matter: I know what I say will be received with all possible disadvantages, that may arise, either from the great Partiality many have for that Discourse, or from the just disdain others may conceive, that a person unknown and undesired should engage in it.

Yet after all this, I am so entirely at your Disposal, that I shall resist no longer, but deliver my self very plainly, in that blunt freedom that must be allowed my breeding, and way of converse, upon some of the most material things in that Paper. I cannot but acknowledge the *Writer* seems a person that is in good earnest, and does sincerely desire the peace of our Church; that so we being at one among our selves, may both carry on the common design of true Piety, and resist the the In-roads Popery is making on us. He writes gravely, and like a man that has deep impressions of Religion upon him: and so I am heartily sorry so good a man as I verily believe he is, should have been prevailed on, to have done so unadvised a thing, as was first the writing, and then the publishing such a Discourse. We do already groan under too many divisions, and we need no new attempts to en-

crease them: or make parties among our selves. And therefore the Rule of our Saviour ought to have been followed, if he had thought his Fathers and Brethren had trespassed against the Laws of Charity, Order, or Edification: He should first have proposed it to his Ordinary, and the Right Reverend Bishops, and have hoped that either they should have satisfied him, or he them. But to begin at publishing such Papers, cannot be reconciled with the Rule of the Gospel: for if he owed that precaution in dealing with his Brother, it was much more due to his Mother the Church, and the Spiritual Fathers of it, and he should not have attempted as *Cham* did, to expose any supposed nakedness of his Ghostly Parents.

There was another thing he ought to have considered, that Christ has said, *Woe unto him by whom offences come.* By offences or scandals are meant such stumbling-blocks, snares and gall-traps, as may occasion our Brother's fall. I wish he had considered this well, and then, I suppose, he would have seen that his labours in that Discourse were like both to encourage those that do unreasonably separate from us, and make some of these who adhere to our Communion stumble, and shake, when they see such things said by one, who seems to be of our Church, and yet studies very industriously to blame us in every thing.

If he had minded these things more, and the heats of his Breast and Head less; he had not gone so far, nor trusted himself so much in a matter of such high concern. For I am confident, had he shewed his Papers, during all that time they lay by him, to any Man of Learning or Judgment, they had so clearly convinced him of a great many mistakes, that this Issue had turned Abortive, and died before the Birth.

After all the horrid abuse has been made of the supposed returns of Prayer, which has turned away the minds of many from those sacred exercises, either in private, or publick; looking on all secret wrestling with God, as the heat of fancy, and all publick worship, as the compliance with that form or party we cleave to; it appeared strange to me, to find a man that seems inflamed with a zeal for devotion, own his publishing this upon returns of Prayer: which to some will be thought to patronize *Enthusiasm*, and by others will be made a scoff to jeer at all Piety and Devotion. God answers our Prayers when he bestows on us those Graces and Blessings we ask of him: but if any body that is fond of some composure of his, which he has a great mind to publish, prays for direction what to do; and if he take measures from the temper of heats, he feels after such Prayers, he exposeth himself to the greatest dangers imaginable. For, he ought

to examine what he is about, not by his own liking or disliking it, but by the Rules of the Gospel, of doing all things to Peace, Edification, and Order: by the rules of Humility and Modesty, not over-valuing himself, nor putting himself forth, but as he is called and directed by a good warrant and authority: and by the Rules of the Church and State where he lives. And if any man, on a pretence of following the answers of Prayer, will supercede any of these Rules, he sets up one of the worst principles that can be imagined, which must needs subvert all Religion and Government. I do not deny, but in matters purely indifferent, and that relate only to my self, when I cannot see wherein God has bounded my liberty; many directors of Consciences, think it is a safe rule to pray to God for direction, and after that, to follow what makes the strongest impression upon my mind: but this must only take place, where the thing in all its circumstances is absolutely indifferent, and in my choice; for if I carry it farther, I cannot stop, till I have run into all the precipices of the worst kind of Enthusiasm.

Now sure the Author of that Discourse could not be such an ill Discerner, as not to see that he was not left to his free choice in this matter: and therefore there is too much ground to suspect that he made his Prayers, having this Idol of his beloved Book in his heart: and praying in such a manner, if God left him to his Idols, to be deceived and misled by them, it is nothing but what the Prophet threatned to all that should so pray to God. From which I hope I may safely conclude, that if this Author had examined what he was about, rather by these sure and constant Rules before hinted, than by the unstable and fallacious illusions of an inflamed brain, he had weighted things in juster ballances. Ezek 14. ver. 7, 8, 9.

But I shall now enter into the Retail of the particulars he suggests, having thus viewed it in gross. And to begin with what he says about *Articles of Faith*, there are two things I wish he had considered when he wrote it. The first is, thanks be to God, there is no need of any canvassing about these in our present case: for the greatest parties of the *Non-conformists* have not departed from us, for any Articles of Faith: there being none of the Articles of our Church, that relate to Faith so much as contested by them. This being on the contrary, the great thing they boast; that they do in all things agree to the Doctrine and belief of our Church. So that I cannot imagine why fifteen pages were written on this Subject, when the Writer designed *Union*. For the Church of *England* is so far from being taxed

noted by them for imposing and dogmatizing, that they rather judge our Articles too slack and large: and therefore when they went to compile a *Confession of Faith*, how positively they determined in many points, in which the Articles of our Church leave us to the freedom of our thoughts, is apparent to all. It cannot be denied but the Articles of our Church were compiled with the highest discretion, and moderation that ever was used by un-inspired men. Where Questions were so subtil, and intricate, that there were great grounds of doubting on both hands, as about *Predestination, and the Efficacy of Grace*, they laid down the Doctrine of the Church in such general expressions, as left a freedom to every one to choose in so difficult a point: where the Questions were Metaphysical, as about the manner of our justification, they did not impose any subtilty on the Consciences of the Clergy; who only are obliged to subscribe them.

And this temper is the more to be wondred at, since we know by their other writings, and the accounts of that time, that the chief compilers of these Articles, were in their private opinions positive, and determined about those things: Yet they thought it very unreasonable to establish controverted Points as Articles of Faith, and to make their private judgments the standards of Church communion. So that as it is a most unreasonable charge on the Church of *England*, to say she has tyrannically imposed many unnecessary conditions on her members in Points of Faith and Doctrine; it is also a very strange complaint from one that expresses a great zeal for re-uniting the Dissenters to the Body: for any relaxation that way would be so far from bringing them nearer, that it would rather drive them farther from us, upon new and more justifiable prejudices. What occasion would be given them to insult, and say, we had changed the boundaries and land-marks our Predecessors had left us; and were making a new hotch-potch of a Church, to take in all Heresies? how would the Church of *Rome* triumph, and say that our Faith was indeed temporary, and changed with the fashion? And let the Wit of Man devise such an Engine for propagating Popery, as to disclaim the Doctrines and Practices of the Primitive Church. This were indeed to fortifie the prejudices of *Novelty* and *Schism*, with which the Emissaries of that Church, study to aspers us to the highest degree possible. For I speak it knowingly, we should by so doing, shake, if not wholly scandalize and drive from us, the greatest part of our most devout Communicants: who are all apt to say of those first ages, *Let my soul be with theirs.*

And this carries me farther on this head, into a just wonder and astonishment, to see one that is but *of yesterday*, (I shall not add the

other part of that Character) assume such a confidence to judge those great Worthies, who came out of the fire of the persecution, with so many Trophies of an honourable victory about them, having lost their eyes, and other members in the conflict; who sate in the Council of Nice to determine in a Point of no less concern, than the Glory of the Son of God, by whose Cross and Spirit they had triumphed over all the powers both of Earth and Hell. I remember when I lived in Holland and conversed with the Disciples of *Episcopius* and Curcellæus, we often discoursed upon this very point: they usually said, *Why should we not accept of Scripture expressions, without imposing new ones for Tests?* And often did they entertain me with Discourses of the *simplicity of the first Christians, and the most ancient Creeds.* To whom I always answered, as long as the Christians did retain that simplicity of believing, it had been very ill done to have introduced new expressions or subtilties into our Faith or Creeds: but when it is apparent that them have invented corrupt glosses for Scripture-expressions, and use the Scripture-phrases only with a reserve of these meanings; it was necessary to find out such Tests as might discover their double dealing. For to accept of general expressions, from one that I have good reason to believe uses them in an Heretical sence, is plainly to accept money that I know is of a false alloy, because it hath the right stamp.

Nor can it be said, the difference was small and about a speculative point, for the difference was both about a matter of great weight, and about a practical point. I suppose no body can be so shallow as to think it was about a Letter, the one being for the ὁμοούσιος the other for the ὁμοιούσιος, for then the ὀρθόδοξοι differed but in another Letter, that made Christ totally unlike the Father. The controversie was, *Whether the Word that dwelt in the Flesh of our blessed Saviour, was a Being truly distinct from the substance of the Father, and created by the Father*, or as others did moderate it, *made by the Father? so that there was a time, wherein he was not? Or if he was the incarnate Word, that was from all eternity with the Father.* In short, whether He was God or a Creature? And when the *Arians* pretended that they believed *the Word was God*, the Fathers thus argued with them: Either He is God by his Nature and *Substance*, or not; if He was not God by His Nature, then it was but a cheat and a false Title, they gave him: but God's honour was not so to be given to another. If he was God by his Nature and *Substance*, then he must either be of the same *substance* with the Father, or of a different *substance*: if of the same *substance*, they gained what they desired: if He was of another *substance*, then there were more Gods than one; if there were two different

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rent *Subſtances*, that were both truly God's in *Subſtance* which was groſs Polytheiſm. I muſt acknowledge I ſhall very much ſuſpect any man's reaſoning faculties are not ſound, that ſees not a neceſſary ſeries of truths hanging cloſely together in this contexture. So that it is plain the *Arians* and our Modern *Plotinians* (who are indeed more ingenuous than the *Arians* were) did not think *the Word that was made Fleſh, was truly God.* And now let any Man judge if there can be a greater and weightier matter, than whether Jeſus Chriſt were God by Nature, or only a Creature. Nor can a miſtake riſe higher than to believe Him to be a *meer Man*, who is *the Eternal Son of God*, or Him to be *the Eternal Son of God*, who was only a *meer Man*.

This controverſie was not only ſpeculative but practical, for our apprehenſions and belief muſt direct our acts of worſhip, and adoration: if Chriſt be only a Man, we cannot have that veneration for Him, that confidence in Him or love to Him, which we offer to the great God. For there can be no Idolatry in the World ſo great, as the worſhipping a meer Man with the ſame adoration, both inward and outward, that we offer up to the Father. This is ſure, if any thing can be, the giving God's Glory to another. On the other hand if He be the great God and of the ſame ſubſtance with the Father, it is the moſt irreverent, irreligious and ungrateful thing in the whole World, not to offer that adoration which is due to Him, equally with the Father: He having ſo ſignally commended and expreſſed his love to us. So that this is a matter not only of ſpeculation, but of practice.

This may ſuffice to ſatisfie any body, how juſt, reaſonable, and neceſſary it was for the *Council of Nice* to make their Definition in this matter, that ſo a Teſt might be found out, for diſcriminating the Catholicks from the Hereticks. I am as far from a deſire of multiplying new Creeds and Subſcriptions as any man alive, but if there be not ſome in the Church, how ſoon may a conſpiracy be laid and formed within the Boſom of it, that lying ſecret under general expreſſions, till it be ripe and ſtrong, at length, as out of a *Trojan horſe*, ſhall burſt forth to ruine and ſubvert Religion. It is indeed a high tyranny of the Church of *Rome*, that has added *Anathema's* to her Canons about leſſer and diſputable points: but except there be Foundations laid, on which all the builders of the Church muſt edifie, we ſhall ſoon grow worſe than a *Babel*, for we ſhall build with divided Languages and Tongues.

For what he ſays about ceremonies and all other controverted heads among us, I ſhall only offer you one or two conſiderations. The firſt

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is, that in all such Rents as are now in our Church, it is a very unreasonable demand to desire any thing that is established should be changed without a very great cause; for to love changes for changes sake, is an argument of a light unsetled mind. And mutations in things external, work much on the vulgar, who seldom looking beyond what they see and hear, are apt to be much startled at any visible alteration. This made our blessed Saviour in his new Dispensation alter outward things as little as was possible. Therefore he sanctified two Rites that were familiar to the *Jews*, to be the two great Sacraments of his Gospel, that so the *Jews* might be as little startled as might be. But if there did appear great and just causes to change things that are indifferent, there is no doubt but the Fathers of our Church, and our Legislators, *the King and His two Houses of Parliament* would examine them very deliberately. If then the Author of that Paper offers any reasons for a change, he must take care they be very good and material ones. I hope he will not insist on the so often batled objections against them. There is but one new reason can be offered, and that is an agreement of a considerable body of our Dissenters, to desire such concessions, upon which, they being granted, they would enter into the Communion of the Church; when this is once done, then such a step were made, as must needs set all men to very deep and serious considerations, to ballance the evils of Schism, the danger of Popery, the relaxing all Order, and the abounding of all impiety among us, which those who have made the Schism, are deeply guilty of.

It is the duty of all men to lay these things home to the Consciences of such as separate from us; that they may not stifly keep up a breach, through which so much mischief flows in upon us, but may in colder blood review what is past; and come to make such offers, as may encourage those who love peace and moderation, to drive on so desired a work. But to expose the dignity of a Church, and of constitutions setled by so long a prescription, to the scorn of every bold Dissenter, can have no other effect, but to encourage them in their Schism, and heap contempt upon our selves, when we prostitute Law and Authority to such affronts. Then do those that divide, boast, as if we distrusted our Cause, or were afraid either of the strength of their Reasons, or of their Party: and they stand their ground the more firmly, because they see us quitting ours; and are confident, that if they can weather out a few more blasts, we will leave the field entirely to them. This makes their pride swell, and their demands become endless and unsatisfiable. But if their Stomachs were so far down, that they had the Humility and Honesty to confess they had

been mistaken in some things, and were now resolved to go as far towards the repairing our breaches, as their consciences could allow, and did propose a clear Scheme of what they would submit to, and on what terms they would again enter into the Communion of the Church, then I am confident such candid dealing will find an entertainment beyond what they can justly hope for. And that upon very good reasons: for we ought to make another account of the modest scruples of such as are indeed tender Consciences, than of the presumptuous demands of insolent Sectaries. And it is most just that propositions this way ought to begin from them: they are Subjects, and the Laws are settled: and they gave very just cause both to Church and State to be displeased with them, and to distrust them, and so they ought to address for favour upon such reasonable terms, that the insolence of their demands may give no new grounds of irritation and offence.

And till then, all that is incumbent on us of the Church, is, first to live and labour so, as to out-do all these appearances of good among them, which have wrought so much on the Vulgar, then to pray the God of Peace, that he would of his infinite Mercy and Compassion to these divided Churches, pour down a Spirit of Love and Peace on all men: and in fine, to do all that lies in us to convince those that separate, of the evil of their courses, in making such breaches in Christ's Vineyard and Sheepfold, that lets in the Foxes and Wolves: and to be disposing our own minds into such a gentle temper, that notwithstanding all past provocations, and all the advantages we have from the Laws and Law-givers, yet we may be willing to yield even to the peevish weakness and unaccountable scruples of these that separate from us, as far as can be without giving just occasions of scandal on the other hand. But to give them such advantages as this Discourse does, is, that which I cannot reconcile to the common Rules of Prudence and Edification.

I wish this Writer had also considered, how unjust a way of reasoning it was, to argue from the indecencies and abuses any may be guilty of in the use of some of the Ceremonies, that they ought so be taken away. Alas! at that rate, the most sacred and solemn things shall not escape; since all things when they fall into the hands of mortal men, are subject to such abuses. He did also very much forget himself, when he reckoned, the *Bowing to the Altar* one of the Ceremonies of the Church, which has never enjoyned it, neither by Canon nor Rubrick: for in it all are left to their freedom. So that this can furnish none with so much as a pretence to excuse their separation.

For his long Discourse about Church-men and their Qualifications

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and Labours chiefly about Preaching, it certainly deserves great consideration, and in it we cannot steer by a better Rule, than those most excellent constitutions Antiquity has left us: which are indeed so divine and pure, that if this Age could bear such a Reformation, I know no greater blessing could befal us. But it is more to be wished than hoped for, to see *Plato's Commonwealth* built upon the *ruines and dregs of* Romulus. We ought to converse much with the writings the Ancients have left us concerning the Qualifications and Employments of the Clergy, such as *Nazianzen's Apologetick*, *Chrysostome's Books of the Priesthood*, and *Gregory the Great's Books of the Pastoral care*. But whatever defects we may charge our selves with, this is so far from contributing to our Schism, that it is rather the effect and consequence of it; for where there is *bitter zeal and strife, there is confusion and every evil work*: and so it was not needful to put this in a Book concerning Union. Nor have these that divide from us any reason of insulting over us, whatever we may have to humble our selves for those things, and least of all for Preaching: which perhaps is at this day come to such perfection, that if all our other defects were as much mended as these of Preaching are, we might on all accounts be esteemed the best and most excellent Church that ever was since the Ages of Miracles.

In a word, to end all that needs be said on these Heads; the grounds of our communicating with any Church, being chiefly the purity of their Doctrine and Worship, and that their Order and Rules are such that they hinder the exercise of no Christian virtue, but very much advance it; no personal failings or defects, how publick and gross soever, ought to make any to separate from such a Society. For till I be involved in some guilt (which no other Man's faults can do) by joyning in Communion with a Church, I ought still to abide in it.

This must either be laid down for a Principle, otherwise Schisms and Rents shall be endless, for as long as men are men, personal failings and corruptions are unavoidable. And now having thus far examined the most considerable parts of that Discourse, except what relates to *Bishops and Priests*: about which you desire chiefly to be satisfied; and upon which the Author has laid out his utmost strength: I come at last to consider that: which I shall do with that candor and calmness I have carried along with me hitherto.

His opinion is, *That the Bishops Precedency over the rest of the Clergy with Authority to ordain, to exhort, to rebuke, to judge, and censure as he found cause, is of Apostolical institution, and hath been continued in the whole Church of God ever since, so that nothing but necessity of that can excuse those that set up another Form of Government: therefore this*

this Government ought to be still kept in the Church. But after all this; he thinks the Bishops and Priests are *one and the same Order; so that by their Ordination they have no more power conferred on them, than Presbyters have:* This he studies to prove; 1. *From the silence of the Scriptures, that do not mention two such Orders.* 2. *Because he finds but one Ordination, which he thinks cannot confer two Characters.* 3. *Because the Apostles call themselves Presbyters, and no where Bishops.* 4. *Because S.* Clement *in his Epistle speaks only of Bishops and Deacons.* 5. Justin Martyr *calls the Bishop only President.* 6. *S.* Cyprian *calls himself* Præpositus. 7. *Because the form of ordaining Elders, is the same with which Christ ordained the Apostles*; Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose Sins ye forgive, they are forgiven them. 8. *The bad consequences of admitting this difference of Order are great; for it will condemn all the other Reformed Churches.* Upon these Reasons he rejects the *Difference of Order*, and instead of that, says, *the Apostles ordain'd all equally to be Bishops or Presbyters, but some having more eminent gifts than others, the Apostles did by Commission empower and constitute These to be Overseers and Bishops over the rest, from which beginning this practice has been kept up in the Church ever since.* Therefore he thinks *Priests ought not to ordain other Priests; but yet having done it, it is valid, and may without a crime be done by a Priest that were by shipwrack or any such chance cast into a Country where no Person can be had that is thus commissionated to ordain.*

This is a full and clear account of his Opinion, and of the Reasons that led him to it. I shall now examine both, and First, let us see what all this will amount to. This must signifie little or nothing to the composing differences amongst us, but will rather inflame them. For a Presbyterian may upon this supposition, very reasonably plead, that since by his Order he has the same Authority that a Bishop hath, he ought not to be obliged or limited in the exercise of it. That any such Commission the Apostles gave some extraordinary men, must have been but temporary, for their lives; for if they had judged this a thing needful to be kept up in the Church, they had given such lasting directions about it, constituting it a distinct order, as might have preserved it still in the Church; but since they did not that, we have no reason to acknowledge any such power now. And therefore if Priests see their Bishop doing what they think amiss, they may assume that Power their Order has given them, and judge and depose him too, if need be. I am confident that *Author* will not allow of this, and yet it is visible that it arises naturally out of what he has set down.

But suppose he could avoid that, what does all he has said contri-

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bute to the re-uniting our Dissenters, and us again: somewhat he may say as to the *foreign Churches*, and yet I hope to shew, that may be done another way. A little may be also said, to such as were ordained before, by Priests in the time of the late Usurpation; who are now but a small number: and yet even these, by his Principles did a very ill thing, who out of no necessity, but in wanton sedition against their Bishops, threw them off by the strength and force of a prevailing Army. And if such Persons ought not to be marked by some censure, or at least not admitted to any sacred Employments, till they have been sensible of their fault, and repent of it; I leave it to every body to consider. But for the rest of our Dividers, as long as the Bishops have such an Authority over their Priests, by what Title or conveyance soever they possess it, it is all one to them. And indeed the weaker their Title is, they will think they have the stronger Plea: So that this Notion were it ever so true, cannot go a great way towards the settling matters among us, but on the contrary will rather widen the breach.

I go next to examin his opinion in it self: that there are many contradictions in his Discourse, is apparent. For if Bishops have *Authority to ordain, to exhort, to revoke, to judge, and censure as they find cause*, and if this Authority *was given by the Apostles*: Is not here a distinct Order? all Ecclesiastical Functions are but so many Commissions from God, of which the conveyers were the Apostles, for what is the order of Priesthood, but a Commission from God, which was first issued out by the Apostles, giving such Persons Authority to Preach, and to administer Sacraments? and can any think that the Apostles could have given any such Commissions, but

1. They must have had the direction of the Holy Ghost, that assisted them in all they went about.

2. They must have conferred such a measure of the Holy Ghost, as was necessary for the discharge of such a Commission, for they that conferred the Holy Ghost on all they laid their hands on, would have done it much more on those they did commissionate for so high a trust.

3. This must have been done by imposition of hands, so we find they laid hands on *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when they were sent to the *Gentiles*, though they were endued with extraordinary power before, and were *Apostles*, according to what St. *Paul* says of himself in the beginning of his Epistle to the *Galatians*. God had also by name marked them out for that service, yet hands were laid on them, and so they were sent out by the Holy Ghost. *Act.* 13 *ver.* 2, 3.

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4. If these Persons commissionated with such Authority were empowered by the Apostles, then all the rest of the Priests were bound to submit to that Authority, and whatever power they might have pretended before that, then, since latter deeds do vacate and invalidate former ones, that power being conferred on another, who is acknowledged vested with the Authority, the former must be supposed divested of it, and bound to subject themselves to it. Nor could they, except in cases of simple necessity, re-assume it, without rejecting the Authority of the Apostles themselves: according to that maxime of our Saviours, *He that rejecteth me, rejecteth him that sent me.*

5. Either the Apostles did declare this was only temporary, that for the present exigency, such extraordinary persons were vested with such Authority, or that this constitution should continue still in the Church. He cannot chuse the former, for then that order must have determined with these mens lives, in whose hands it was entrusted: which is against what that Author pleads for. So that he must say they declared that such Commissions must continue to the end of the World, otherwise there were no obligation lying on the Church to continue them, which yet he acknowledges.

6. After the Apostles were dead, either these Commissions were to be renewed on the account of what the Apostles had appointed, or only by a voluntary delegation of the Priests and People; if the former, then our Bishops at this day act by vertue of a Commission from the Apostles: If the latter be true, then 1. This delegation may be given, or not, as they please, and so the order may vanish. 2. They may limit or enlarge it as they please, and so may very much change it. 3. Those who are ordained Bishops without such Commissions, cannot be Bishops at all. For if that Power be only a Commission, then it cannot be seated in any person that has got no such Commission: therefore there being no such thing asked as a delegation of such Authority from the Priests, (for the Election of a Dean and Chapter relates only to the Person, but not to the Power and Office;) none are now truly Bishops; since they have no such Commissions: nor does the Metropolitan, and the other consecrating Bishops, give any such Commissions, but only ordain a Bishop to the Work and Office so committed to him, by the imposition of their hands: in which it is clear, as also from the whole Office of the Consecration of Bishops, that they suppose there is a standing Power and Authority in the Office, and therefore do believe it does not depend upon any Commission they can give, all they do being to ordain him to the Office to which the Authority is necessarily annexed. So that it is clear, that either we have no Bishops at all, or the Commission

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for this Authority is annexed to the Office, and the Church does not constitute the Office, but only admit or ordain a person duly elected and qualified unto an Office already constituted.

From all these particulars which necessarily follow upon that Author's *Hypothesis*, I may well assume, that by his principles Bishops were empowered for ordination, and jurisdiction by the Apostles, they being directed in it by the Holy Ghost; and laying their hands on them, and conferring the Holy Ghost by such imposition of hands: upon which all the rest both Clergy and Laity were bound to submit to them: and that the Apostles intended this order should be still continued in the Church: So that all succeeding Bishops act by that Power then conveyed by the Apostles to the first Bishops, and continued with their Successors to the end of the World. And if this does not state the distinct Office of Bishops and Priests, let every Reader judge. There is a different power lodged with the Bishops, another Commission ratified by an imposition of hands, which is to continue in a succession for ever.

So that, that *Hypothesis* destroys it self, establishing so many different things that contradict one another.

But before I go to answer his arguments, I shall premise somewhat of the Office of Bishop and Priest as it appeared in it's first Origination.

When Christ sent out his Apostles with an Universal jurisdiction as they gathered and planted Churches, there was a necessity to fix some to have the charge of them, and to labour in the conversion of others. Now the Apostles having observed, that Christ had in the institution of the Sacraments, and many other things, followed such customs as were received by the Jews: they must certainly have likewise followed the same Rule, for as the Gospel was first offered to the Jews, so they raising their new superstructure on the foundation of *Moses* and the Prophets, could not change the customs that were among the Jews, and instituted by *Moses*, farther than was necessary for emancipating the Gentiles from that yoke. Therefore every Church of Christians coming in place of the Temple of *Jerusalem*, in which living Sacrifices were offered up to God, instead of the dead ones that were then antiquated: it was natural for them to take their Model from the Temple of *Jerusalem*, as the Synagogues had also done, in which there was one *High Priest, a company of Priests and Levites*, and this even St. *Jerome* who is in no small esteem with that Author, in that Epistle to *Evagrius*, confirms to us in these words. *And that we may know the Apostolical Traditions were taken out of the old Testament: what Aaron and his Sons, and the Levites were in the Temple, that the*

Bishops,

Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons are to claim to themselves in the Church. But where the number of the Christians was small, they made only one Bishop, who as his charge encreased might ordain others to assist him: This *Epiphanius* tells us he had from the *most ancient* or *profoundest* Histories, and in a matter of Fact to distrust History where it is strengthned with high probabilities from the nature of things is Unreasonable. There were two ranks of Christians, the one was the *Neophites* or *Novices*, who had lately received the Faith, the other were the first fruits of the Gospel, who as they had at the first Preaching received the Faith, so had continued longer in it, and these naturally must have been called the *Seniors*, *Elders* or *Presbyters*.

There is one great errour that vulgar observers fall in, of which though all Criticks have often given notice, yet most people are still guilty of it, which is to judge of all words and appellations, according to the more received customs in or near their own time, not examining how they were used in former Ages, and till this caution be minded, we must fall into frequent mistakes every hour. So at first these names of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were not used in that sense, they came afterwards to be appropriated to; any person that was of great and long standing in the Faith, would have esteemed it an honour to have been called a *Presbyter*, hence it is that there was not that nice and choice distinction of the terms which use did afterwards bring in.

Upon which I shall with all modesty suggest to you one thing, which is not so much considered: that though those who were chosen to look after the Poor be called *Deacons* in the 6. of the *Acts*, yet we find that term in the New Testament is not at all restricted to that sense, even after that appointment. St. *Paul* calls Christ a *Deacon*, *Rom* 15. 8. He calls also the civil Powers the *Deacons*, or as we render it, the *Ministers of God*, *Rom.* 13. 4. He calls all Church-men in general the *Deacons of Righteousness*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 15. He calls the Apostles *Deacons* frequently, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. 2 *Cor.* 3. 6. and 6 *cap.* 4 *v.* and *cap.* 11, *ver.* 23. and *Eph.* 2. 7. and *Col.* 1. 23. 25. He calls *Tychicus* a *Deacon*, *Eph.* 6. 21. and *Col.* 4. 7. He calls *Epaphras* a *Deacon*. So also *Timothy*, 1 *Thes.* 3. 2. So that we see this term is used in a great many other senses, than that of a distributer of Charity among the Widows. Therefore there is no reason to think that when St. *Paul* wrote to the *Philippians*, to the Bishops and Deacons, and when in his Epistle to *Timothy* he gives rules about Church-offices, passing immediately from the *Bishop* to the *Deacons*, that by *Deacons* we are only to understand the distributers of Charity, which was not an office of such importance, that they must have such extraordinary qualifications

ons: but that he is treating of ſome other ſtanding Miniſtry in the Church, in which all Chriſtians were more concerned, and therefore though the ſubſequent uſe of the Church appropriating the term *Deacon* to the other *Function*, theſe places in the Epiſtles of St. *Paul* were generally applyed to theſe *Deacons*, and the Tranſlations of the New Teſtament as well the *vulgar Latin* as other modern ones into the vulgar Languages, rendring the *Greek* of *Deacon* by the term *Miniſter* in all the other places I have marked, This was leſs obſerved, therefore there being ſo good ground to think that St. *Paul* in theſe Epiſtles is treating about Prieſts, whom he calls by a common name *Deacons* or *Miniſters*; we have the diſparity between theſe Offices clearly ſet down in the Scriptures.

Another thing is obſervable, that as long as the extraordinary effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt continued, there could not be ſuch a critical diſtinction of Functions, as came to be ſetled afterwards, when that ceaſed, for even the Laity were by theſe inſpirations qualified to many things, which can be no Preſidents, when that effuſion of the Spirit is ceaſed. So though while that extraordinary aſſiſtance continued, there were not ſuch clear traces of the ſeveral offices in the Church, yet if as ſoon as that began to fail, we find this diſtinction of orders appear clearly; We have reaſon to conclude it could be no other way ſetled but as the Apoſtles had at firſt appointed: Though while every one was ſo full of the Holy Ghoſt all theſe limits were not obſerved, for any extraordinary emiſſion of the Holy Ghoſt being above poſitive and conſtant rules, it is not to be wondred if we have no ſuch clear account of a formed and regulated ſociety, at the firſt planting of Churches in all Offices and Functions. And yet we ſee the New Teſtament full of evidences that Chriſt and his Apoſtles intended there ſhould bee an eminence of Power, committed to ſome Paſtors beyond others. So Chriſt gave that Univerſal Authority over all, to his twelve Apoſtles, ſo the Apoſtles had ſome Aſſiſtants, whom though they employed on other Commiſſions, yet their chief reſidence and work was in ſome particular Churches, over which they were ſet. And to ſuch the Apoſtles write, as to perſons that had the charge and were accountable for theſe Churches. And the reaſon of this was, that ſince there could not be found ſuch numbers of men ſufficiently fitted for the work of the Goſpel, eſpecially in thoſe trying times; Therefore it was to be depoſited in a few hands, who were of more approved ſufficiency and worth, the reſt being to be directed and ſubject to them. This did very much compenſe the defects of other Church-men, who though not ſo well qualified to govern, yet being willing to obey, and able to follow Directions, they

might by that means become very useful in the Gospel.

Now there are two things that must be annexed to that superiour inspection, without which we cannot imagine that it could be managed or have force: the one is, that all to be ordained should receive their orders from such Bishops: Otherwise obedience could not be expected from them, nor could the superiour be any way accountable for them, if he did not convey their Authority to them. It was also necessary that in all matters of difference the superiour Governour, or Bishop, must be looked on as having Authority to rule and command, and so the inferiour judge himself bound to obey. And indeed if in those days of persecution, when the Church had no assistance, but all possible opposition from the civil powers, there had not been very positive rules of obedience and order left by the Apostles, it had not been possible for them to have been kept in any order, or under any Government. But the rules of superiority and subjection were without doubt formally left by the Apostles. Thence it was that the whole Precinct of a Bishops charge was called his *Parish*: in which he had the care of Souls, and for his assistance did chuse out and ordain some of the more eminent and ancient Christians, to assist him in teaching the flock, and administring Sacraments, who were in all things directed by him; and upon his death one of these was presented by the Election of the Clergy and people to the superiour Bishop of the Province, who did ordain him. Now though the writings of the first Ages are for the greater part lost, yet there are abundant evidences to shew this Authority was set up by the Apostles. I need not take pains to prove it against this Author, for he acknowledges it. But because some may perhaps read this Letter, that have not studied this point in the larger and more learned works of the Asserters of this order, I shall say as much on this subject as I think may very justly and reasonably satisfie any Man, and shall wave St. *Ignatius's Epistles*, though the Authority of those is made good with the astonishing labours of the Incomparably Learned *Bishop* of *Chester*.

But being to give a short hint of the uncontested Authorities that may be brought to prove this. I shall begin with *Irenæus* to whom we may very well give credit in a matter of Fact, he knew St. *Polycarp* and was instructed by him, and he tells us that *He was constituted by the Apostles Bishop in the Church of Smyrna.* So that we find from him that St. *Polycarp* was ordained by the Apostles Bishop of the Church of *Smyrna.* Now that great Saint and Martyr, must have taken his Notion of a Bishop from no other original, but that which he saw in his first Instructor: and yet we clearly see, he judged

Iren. lib. 3. cap. 3.
Et apud Euseb. lib. 4. cap. 13.

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the Bishop was more than the *Presidens*, for he reckoning the Tradition of the Faith, counts it by the Bishops that had been in *Rome* from the Apostles days: from whence it appears he considered them as the chief depositaries of the Faith. And in his Epistle to *Victor* Bishop of *Rome*, wherein he condemned his severity in excommunicating the Eastern Bishops for observing *Easter* on the 14 day of the Moon, he lays the whole blame of it upon *Victor*, though *Damasus* tells us it was done *upon a consultation* Victor *held about it with his Presbyters and Deacons*. Now the blame was not to be laid on *Victor*, if it had not been the received practice of the Church at that time, for the Bishops to have the jurisdiction chiefly in their hands. So that we clearly see what *Irenaus* understood a Bishop to be, & if that had not been consonant to what he knew in S. *Polycarp*, who had instructed him, we cannot in reason imagine he would have consented to such a tyrannical excess of power.

Lib. 3. advers. Haeres. cap. 3.

Apud Euseb. Lib. 5. cap. 24.

Tertullian(a) reckons the Origine of the Bishop's power *from the Apostles, from whom they derived their succession*. The same Writer also tells us * that *neither Priests nor Deacons had right to baptize, but upon a power from the Bishop*. He also says † *they received the Sacrament from no hands but their Presidents* (or Bishops.) *Firmilian* that was S. *Cyprian's* contemporary, tells us * *the Bishops* (whom he there calls *Majores natu*, and from the other parts of that Epistle it is plain he means *Bishops*) *did preside in the Church, and had the power of Baptizing, Confirming, and Ordaining*; and even † *Jerome* himself tells us, that *neither Priest nor Deacon had a right to Baptize without the Bishop's command*. And S *Denis* of *Alexandria*, who was undisputed one of the greatest persons in his Age, in his Letter to *Fabius* Bishop of *Rome*, tells him, that upon the difficulty was raised, how to deal with those that died before they had compleated their penitence, *He had given a command that the peace of the Church should be given them*. Where it is clear, the Authority of commanding, and not only presiding, rested with the Bishop.

(a) *De praesc. cap. 32. cont. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5.*

* *De Bapt.*

† *De Cor. Milit.*

* *Epist. 75. inter Epist. Cypr.*

† *Cont. Lucifer.*

Apud Eusib. Lib 6. cap. 44.

And in fine, when the Christian Church came out of the fire of persecution, she decreed in the Council of *Nice*, that the *ancient Customs should be in force*, concerning the power of *Metropolitans* and *Patriarchs*, we must

Can. 6.

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acknowledge there were many very ancient men in that Council, ſo that they, who were within 200 years of the Apoſtolick time, and among whom we may reckon many that were 80 years of Age, or near it, could not eſteem any thing *Ancient*, that had not been derived from the Apoſtolical inſtitution. I ſhall not inſiſt on any thing that was decreed afterwards, where we may ſuſpect power and cunning might have gone a great way to have caſt the Church into ſuch a mould, as might beſt agree with the conſtitutions of the Empire. There might be alſo other Political reaſons, to have made the Biſhops after that time aſpire to Power and Precedence. But I have only vouched the Writers of the former Ages, witneſſes in a matter of Fact, wherein we have no juſt cauſe to ſuſpect them, to depoſe to us what was the ſucceſſive Government of the Church from the Apoſtles days.

Upon all which I deſire, that you and every honeſt man will in your Conſciences conſider a few particulars.

1. Whatever we find generally received in thoſe Ages about a thing that was viſible, and in which none could miſtake, we may ſafely think it came from the Apoſtles days. We may indeed imagine that when ſome of the Apoſtles, to gain upon the *Jews*, did obſerve the Chriſtian *Eaſter* on the 14 day of the Moon, others might have miſtaken this compliance, as if the Apoſtles had judged that the 14. was the right day: We may alſo reaſonably enough think, that when they heard S. *John* mention the thouſand years, that were repreſented to him in his Viſions, they might have thought that had a literal meaning. But in a matter of Government, we cannot fancy how ſuch miſtakes could have been taken up.

2. In things that were external and related to Government, there were many concerned, & ſo an innovation could not be eaſily brought about. The people all looked on, and were obliged to know, to whom they owed obedience in things ſacred: the Clergy we may reaſonably think were not ſo meek, as to have ſubmitted to any unwarranted Authority over them. And if they had known they were equal to their Biſhops in order, they cannot think but either out of a juſt zeal for aſſerting their freedom, or out of an indignation at the miſcarriages and inſolence of ſome Biſhops, or out of an unwillingneſs to ſubmit and obey, which is natural to moſt people, they had aſſerted their equality.

3. Where different Churches among whom we ſee no commerce, eſpecially in the times of perſecution, do agree in any conſtitution, we muſt ſuppoſe that came to them, from ſome perſons, from whom they received common inſtruction. This is an argument thought very con-

convincing against *Atheists*, when we shew many things wherein all mankind agree, which we cannot imagine how it should have been brought about, if they had not common Parents, who had derived these things to all their Posterity. So how can it be imagined that from the Churches of *Armenia* and *Persia* in the East, to those of *Spain* in the *West*, from the *African* Churches in the *South*, to our *British* Churches in the *North*, that had little or no correspondence together, this constitution of the Church should have been Universally received and submitted to. This was when no *General Council* could meet to appoint it. And there was no *Secular Prince* to set it forward, upon any Political account. Now it cannot be imagined, how this could have been brought about, if their common Spiritual Fathers the *Apostles* had not agreed upon it: when they first scattered to go over the World. For we have no reason to think they did ever meet all together again.

4. No men do an ill thing, or desire a change but upon some advantage, or at least the Prospect and Hope of it. And if the worst of men are to be measured by this (I except *Hectors* in vice) what must we judge of those, whom we ought justly to pronounce the best of Men. Their being Bishops exposed them to the sharpest fury of their Persecutors, they were but poor and mean, excepting the Bishops of the great Cities, they commonly were begun with, in every new storm that was raised against the Church, their labours were great, for the care of the flock lay on them, and they were unwearied in the discharge of their Pastoral care. Can we think any man would be fond of such a station, to that degree as to violate the institution of Christ, to arrive at it. But with what face can any man suspect those Ages, of such foul dealing upon whom the impressions of the lowliness of their *Great Master*, were so deep, and who were daily looking for a Cross, and some cruel death: with what assurance could they have prepared for such trials, if out of pride and ambition they had been invading the rights of the other Churches, and aspiring to an unjust domination over their Brethren?

5. Suppose we could be prevailed on, to think the whole Church was so abandoned, the Bishops to their pride, and the Priests to an heedless simplicity, yet how can we reasonably think none of her enemies were so sharp-sighted, as to discern and object this to them? they had malice enough, and if the *Orders* of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were one at first, but afterwards the Episcopal ambition had subdued the Priests under them; some memory of it had been certainly preserved; otherwise how should S. *Jerom* and the pretended *Ambrose* be supposed to have heard of it. But if any such thing had been known,

known, is it possible to imagine that among all the *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks* that were in those Ages, none should have charged it on the Church, but on the contrary, all of them had Bishops of their own? And in the end, when one arose that did condemn the Order, he had very few to follow him, nor did his own party, the *Arrians*, receive this at his hands. Therefore we have all reason to conclude, that there was no such change made after the Apostles days, for S. *Jerome* himself acknowledges, *the Apostles set this Order up*, though he seems to insinuate, it was not in the beginning of their planting the Church. And it is very clear that *Pseudo Ambrose* gives us his own imaginations for Canonical Histories.

So from all these things put together, I dare appeal to any man to say upon his Conscience, if he is not perswaded the Episcopal Authority over the flock and the Clergy, is clearly derived from the Apostles. All this I have said more fully than perhaps seemed at first view needful, but when I consider that though this Author does confess the Episcopal Function to be of Apostolical institution, yet over his whole Discourse there are many things said, that do very much detract from that very acknowledgment, which the force and evidence of truth drew from him in the beginning of that Chapter: So that some suspect these words were only set down, that upon such an introduction he might seem a friend, and so wound both more securely, and more mortally; since also many who read and magnifie that discourse, do with open mouth declame against this order, I hope none will judge it impertinent, if I have taken some pains to lay such things before them, as may give new and fresh impressions of the Divine and Apostolical Origine of this holy Office. All that remains yet to be considered, is, what Answers to make to the Objections that Author layes in our way.

His first Objection is, from the silence of the Scriptures, to which, the answer will be easily gathered from what has been said, for if what I do suggest about the sense of Deacons in S. *Paul's* Epistles, be true, then the case is most clear; but besides that, there are manifest hints of a disparity, or superiority in Scripture, and these are expounded by so authentical and clear a Tradition, that we are not more sure of the *Change of the Jewish Sabbath into the Christian Lords day*, or of *the Baptism of Infants*, or of the *Canon of the Scripture*, than we are of this Apostolical institution. It was necessary that all supernatural revealed truths should have been clearly and fully expressed in Scripture, and none of these left to the mistakes and miss-representation of every age, but for matters of Government it was enough, if general Rules were given,

given, which the platform of the Churches then gathered, did so explain, that we have no reason to have scruples about it, though a full and formal account of it be not left us.

The second Objection is, because he finds the Apostle gave but one Ordination, which he cannot conceive, how it could confer two distinct Orders or Characters. This is founded on a great mistake; for pray cannot the same great Seal, that affixed to one Writing, does only confer the honour of *Baronage*, when affixed to another Writing confer the dignities of *Duke, Marquess, Earl, Viscount* and *Baron*? So it is plain the Apostles when they were to send out any with a sacred commission, by the same outward Rite, they might have conferred whatever authority they intended to confer. For they declaring on what errand, and with what power they sent out a person, and imposing hands upon him, that imposition confirmed the mission and authority committed to such persons. So there was no need of their ordaining Church-men through several degrees, but as they saw men qualified, they did ordain them, and I do not question but with the same imposition of hands, and the same prayers and words, they might have ordained two persons at once, the one a *Bishop*, the other a *Priest*. For we are not to consider in an Ordination the outward rite and prayers only, but the preceding declaration made, and the publick intention of those that ordain. It is true, we find by the ancientest Ordinals we have, that there were some differences used in the consecration of Bishops, that were not used when a Priest was ordained, which may be reasonably judged were very ancient, *they held the Book of the Gospels over his head and shoulders, and all the Bishops laid their hands on him, one pouring out the blessing.* And *Denis* the *Areopagite* tells us, that besides the imposition of hands, and laying the Book of the Gospels on his head, and the prayer, *He was marked by the Sign of the Cross, and saluted by the Bishop and all the holy Order.* And in the ordination of a Priest, *the Bishop and the Priests with him only laid their hands on his head, and blessed him.* By which simplicity of their forms we may on the way observe, how unlike the Primitive Church was to the *Roman* Church: that abounds in so many superstitious fopperies, with which their *Pontifical* is full. There was also provision made, that none should be made a Bishop, till he had passed through inferior degrees, not from any such subtleties as School-men have since devised, but that none might arrive at the highest Order of the Church, till he gave a sufficien

Can. 2. Con. Carth. 4. de Eccles. Hier. cap. 5.

Can. 3. Carth. & Dion. ibid.

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trial of his faith and manners, by his deportment in all the inferiour steps in which they intended he should stay so long, that all might be well satisfied about him. And in or a little before S. *Cyprian's* time, they appointed some inferior steps, which were not sacred Orders, nor pretended to be Apostolical, but degrees of probation through which those who intended to serve the Church, should pass, before they were made Deacons. And this furnishes me with a very considerable remark, to shew the fidelity of those Ages in the accounts they give us of Apostolical institutions: for they do every where tell us, there were but three sacred orders, *Deacon*, *Priest* and *Bishop*, and no where study to make us believe these other degrees of *Porters*, *Readers*, *Acolyths*, *Exorcists* and *Sub-Deacons* were Apostolical: Now if the Episcopal superiority and power was a device of that Age, or of the former, why should they not have called all *Apostolical*, as well as some parts of it. But it is plain they were careful and conscientious in delivering punctually to us, what was *Apostolical*, and what only *Ecclesiastical*.

His third Objection is, because the Apostles call themselves sometimes *Presbyters*, and no where Bishops; this sure, if it prove any thing, must prove more than that Writer intends, even that *Presbyters* are above Bishops. He should also have considered that the Apostles do call themselves much oftner *Deacons* than *Presbyters*. So if this argument be of force, then the Deacons must be likewise of the same Order with the Bishops. But the true account of this is, that the name *Presbyter* was used for any ancient person of Authority, and among the Christians it signified a Christian of a long standing. So upon both these accounts, the Apostles being then both ancient men, and of great authority, and those that were the first fruits of the World unto Christ, might well be called *Presbyters*, though not in that sense by which the following Ages understood that term. For I do not question but the names of Bishops and Priests, were at first promiscuously used and continued so even to *Irenæus* his time, who in his Letter to *Victor*, calls the Bishops of *Rome*, that were before him *Presbyters*, but afterwards those two terms were appropriated to that sense we now understand them in. Or if you will stand upon the Apostles being called *Presbyters*, to prove an equality or superiority of *Presbyter* over the Bishop: Let me desire you to observe, that S. *Peter*, who calls himself an *Elder*, yet puts us in mind that *Bishops* are above *Presbyters*, for he tells us in that same Epistle that Christ was the *Bishop of our souls*, and in that subordination I acknowledge the Apostles were but *Priests*, which perhaps gave occasion to *Ignatius* to resemble

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the Bishop and *Presbyters* to *Christ and his Apostles*. Besides it is as unreasonable to build any opinion concerning these orders, upon such humble expressions of the Apostles, as if because a *Prince* or a *General* will ordinarily call his *Souldiers*, *fellow Souldiers*, that therefore they and he are of the same order.

The fourth objection is, because St. *Clement* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians* speaks only of *Bishops* and *Deacons*. It is true in one place he does say, that *the Apostles did ordain the first fruits of their labours, having first tryed them in the Spirit, to be Bishops and Deacons.* But if what was before observed about the use of the Term *Deacon*, be well grounded, then St. *Clement*'s words may be also very justly understood of *Bishops* and *Priests*, but because this has the prejudice of novelty against it, let us look further into that Epistle, and we shall find it no less clear by other expressions, that there were different orders in the Church, though in that place he comprehends them under that common name, for he commends them *because they were subject to their Governours, and gave all decent honour to their Presbyters*, and again says, *Let us reverence our Governours, and honour our Presbyters*, and clearly applies the subordination that was in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, of *High-Priest*, *Priest*, *Levite*, and *Lay-man* to the Ecclesiastical constitution, as will appear to any that will consider that Epistle.

From which I conclude, that though St. *Clement* did comprehend *Bishops* and *Priests* under the common name of *Bishop*, yet he shews us evidently, there were *Governours* in the Church that were superiour to the *Presbyters*, and to whom there were higher degrees of honour due: and *particular Ministrations proper*, as were to the *High-Priest*.

The fifth objection is, that *Justin Martyr* calls the Bishops only *Presidents*. This is of no force, for that *Father* had no occasion given him to reckon up the several Functions in the Church when he was writing an *Apology* for the Christians to the *Roman Senate*, in which he gives a plain and simple account of their Faith and Worship, but it had been to very little purpose for him, to have told the *Roman Senate*, what were the several *Orders* of *Church-Officers* among them. And it is not improbable that both he and *Tertullian* might have used the Term *Presidents*, the rather because it would be the more easily understood by the *Romans* than either *Bishop* or *Priest*.

The sixth objection is, from St. *Cyprian*, who calls himself *Præpositus* or President. But neither does this signifie much, for we are to consider the sence of Authours, not so much by some terms or words they use, as by the formal accounts they give us, when they come to treat expresly on any subject. Therefore when we would examine that Father's opinion in this matter, we are neither to consider what in modesty he writes to his Flock or Clergy, nor what terms he makes use of, but the sure way is to see what his sense of the Episcopal Authority was, when he formally treated of it upon it's being questioned and to this we have reason to appeal. St. *Cyprian's* *Epist. 55.* Counsel was asked by *Rogatian* another Bishop concerning the censure of a *Deacon*, who had carried himself insolently toward him, to whom St. *Cyprian* writes, *that by the vigor of his Episcopat and the Authority of his Chair he had just power to have avenged that insolence instantly.* And toward the end he says, *these are the beginnings of Hereticks, and the rise and attempts of ill meaning Schismaticks, that they may please themselves, and despise their Bishop, with a swelling pride. So men separate from the Church so a prophane Altar is set up without, and so men rebel against the Peace of Christ and the divine Ordinance and Unity.* These words St. *Cyprian* writes like one that prophesied of the age we are born in, and if he does not assert the Power of Jurisdiction to the height I leave to every ones eyes.

Epist. 10. And the same Saint in another Epistle, challenging the insolent presumption of some Priests, hath these words. *There is no danger which we ought not now to fear, our Lord being thus offended, when some of the Priests, who neither are mindful of the Gospel, of their place, or of the judgement to come, and consider not that there is a Bishop set over them, do assume all to themselves, to the reproach and contempt of him that is set over them, which was never at all done by any that went before us.*

Epist. 27. And another of his Epistles which is about the same subject, concerning the Lapsed that had fallen in the persecution begins with these words. *Our Lord whose commands we ought to fear and observe when he was settling the Bishop's honour (or authority) and the rule of his Church says to Peter: I say thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, &c. From thence through the Revolution of times and successions, the Ordination of Bishops and the account of the Church hath run down, that the Church should be constituted upon Bishops, and every Act of the Church should be*

governed by these Presidents (or *Præpositi* as that Authour would have them called, though he seems not to have considered that by this Saint they were not bare *Overseers*, but had the whole power lodged with them.) *Since then this is founded by the Divine Law, I wonder at the bold rashness of some that wrote to me as they did, since the Church is made up of the Bishops, the Clergy, and all that stand* (i. e. in the *Faith*, or *stand in the Worship*) And if in all these places, St. *Cyprian* that lived within 140. years of the Apostles does not very formally assure us, that both the full Authority was in the Bishop and that this was settled by Christ, so that there remains no room for any shift or answer I appeal to you and every unprejudiced Reader.

But there is yet a clearer and less suspected testimony in St. *Cyprian*'s works, in an Epistle which the *Clergy of Rome* wrote to him, when their See was vacant after *Fabian*'s death, from which we may judge, what sense the Priests of that age had of the Episcopal Office: These are their words, *after the death of Fabian of most noble memory, There is no Bishop yet constituted among us, by reason of the difficulty of affairs and the times, who should regulate all these things, and must consider the case of the Lapsed with authority and advice*: Can any thing be more evident, than at that time which was but 150. years after the Apostles were dead, it was acknowledged by the *Priests* that they had no full Authority to *govern the Church* when they wanted a *Bishop*. Now if the difference between *Bishop* and *Priest*, be only by Commission, they being both the same *Order*, then certainly in a vacancy the Priests have a full power. But here we see the greatest company of Priests then in the Christian world, did not think they were of the same *Order*, or had the *Authority of a Bishop*, even in a *sede vacante*. *Ep. 31.*

The seventh objection is, That *Presbyters* are ordained in the same form, in which Christ ordained his Apostles, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven them.* This must either prove nothing to the purpose, or too much, for if there be any strength in this consequence, it must amount to this, That all *Presbyters* are of the same order the Apostles were of, which certainly that Authour will think is too much. The answer to it is given by St. *Paul*, that *there are diversities of operations, administrations, and gifts, but it is the same God, the same Lord, and the same Spirit, for all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit.* And since it is both by the authority and assistance of the Holy Ghost, that all these offices are derived and discharged, it is no argument to prove the Offices are the same, *1 Cor. 12. v. 4. 5. &c.*

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because we pray that all may *receive the Holy Ghost*, it being necessarily to be understood, that every one receives it in his own order. Nor do the following words of *forgiving of sins*, prove any more, but that both these offices are empowered to that equally. For it is acknowledged that a Priest gives absolution as well as a Bishop: but from their being both authorized equally in one thing, it is somewhat a strange kind of inference, to conclude, there is nothing else which a Bishop has authority to do, that is not competent to a Priest.

The last objection is, from the inconvenience that must needs follow on our asserting Bishops and Priests to be of different orders, since this must condemn and un-church all the foreign Churches; which were indeed a very severe and uncharitable censure. I know this is very popular and taking, Therefore I shall study so to clear it, that I hope no scruple shall remain about it.

There are some conditions that are simply necessary to Salvation, without which, no man shall see the face of God, and these do indispensibly oblige all without exception. There be other positive precepts which are of obligation to all who possibly can obey them, so that the contempt or voluntary want of these is a high provocation, they being both means of Grace, and symbols of Christian fellowship instituted by Christ, and to continue for ever in his Church. Yet few are so severe as to deny a possibility of salvation without these. I know St. *Austin* was of this severe side, but in that he is generally censured, as having exceeded; it is an hard Doctrine to condemn all Infants that die without Baptism, at least to exclude them from the Kingdom of Heaven, as St. *Austin* did. For if the Child die in the belly or birth, it is not conceiveable that it should be punished for the want of that which God himself made impossible. And the Primitive Church did generally believe, that such as being converted to the Faith, did suffer Martyrdom, even though they were not baptized, were certainly saved. In like manner if in some Northern and poor Countries, where Wine can scarce be had, and goes at excessive rates, if persons be so poor, that they cannot get Wine, and so either die without the other Sacrament, or offer some other liquour in the Chalice, it were a strange degree of hardness to deny salvation to the people of such a Clime. So also the Offices of the Church are necessary by a divine appointment, even in the principles of most of the *Non conformists*, and yet neither this *Author* nor they will deny but even a Laick if cast upon an Island, where he upon learning their Language came to instruct them in the Christian Faith, and could have

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no commerce with any Church; under such a necessity he might perform all divine Functions; for all Christians are a *Royal Priesthood*, and absolute necessity supersedes all the rules of order, decency and Government.

And the *Presbyterians* who acknowledge as great difference between a *Presbyter* and a Laick, as we plead is between a Bishop and Priest, yet acknowlegde these to be true Churches, which began upon no orders at all, where some persons that understood the Scriptures, did gather Churches, and administer the Sacraments; and they can say nothing for justifying such Churches, which is not applicable to us in this case.

Therefore when the *Western Churches* were so corrupted that none could any longer with a good Conscience receive orders in them, or submit to the terms upon which only their Communion could be had; If any Priests seeing these errours, did instruct the people in the truth, and finding no other way possible to propagate or preserve that purity of Doctrine, did ordain other Priests, though this was irregular and defective yet we are not so uncharitable as to judge people under these circumstances, but acknowledge that absolute necessity supersedes all positive precepts. I know some have been severe on this head, because they judge they are under no absolute necessity. But that is a great mistake, those that live under a Prince of a different Religion, as the *Protestants* in *France* do, could not with any security come over hither to receive orders. For can it be imagined that Princes who are always jealous of their Authority, and chiefly of such of their Subjects, as differ from them in Religion, would suffer them to come and be ordained in another Prince's Dominions: they would certainly use that as a pretence to justifie their severities against them. Nor would they permit them to come under such a strength and compacted unity, as this constitution of the Church would bring them to. Therefore these are to be pitied, helped, and prayed for, and not insulted over. And for those other Churches, that are under Princes or a Government of the same Religion, they are in no less captivity to their Superiours, who will never suffer them to go to another Church for orders; and they would think it a thing inconsistent with the peace of their States, to let any Ecclesiasticks get into so calumniating a power, where the constitution of their policy is Democratical. It is to be regrated that at first their Bishops were stubborn, and would not receive the Reformation, which the chief of the Reformers did very much lament. Nor is it to be wondred, if these Churches being thus formed under these necessities, and not according to the ancient and Apostolical constitution in their ordinations, have

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ſince that time ſtudied to juſtifie themſelves upon other accounts, than bare neceſſity.

In that we think them in an errour, but it being no fundamental one, and the neceſſity that at firſt forced that diſorder, lying ſtill over them, we dare not be ſo ſevere, as to deny them to be true Churches. Though we hold there is ſtill ſuch defects among them, that they are not compleat and perfect in all their conſtitutions. But after all this Charity to thoſe under ſuch hardſhips, we have great cauſe to conclude much more ſeverely againſt thoſe, who being born in a Church that had no ſuch defect in it's firſt Reformation, but was exactly moulded after the primitive pattern, and continued in ſo flouriſhing an eſtate that it was the juſt glory of the Reformed Churches, and the chief object of the envy and hatred of the *Roman*, was at firſt ſeparated from, and then ſubverted by ſome hot-headed Schiſmaticks. Therefore the diſparity being ſo great between our diſſenters, who are ſuch out of *Choice*, and in oppoſition to all Laws both of Church and State, and the foreign Churches who are irregular out of neceſſity, our judging tenderly and favourably of the one, does no way oblige us to relax and forego theſe excellent primitive conſtitutions, on the account of the others among our ſelves.

And thus far I think I have given you a ſatisfactory account of all that this Authour ſays on this head. You know me and my circumſtances better, than to ſuſpect either intereſt, deſign, or obligation, has engaged me to theſe perſwations, ſince by all theſe I am rather byaſſed another way. I have written nothing but that about which I am ſo well aſſured, that I know I am able to make good every particular I have ſet down. And therefore though I do not allow you, to let my name go with this Paper, if you make a more publick uſe of it; It is not that I fear either the cenſures of engaged and partial Zealots, or the replies of a contentious Diſputant, ſo he abſtain from railing and fooling, in neither of which, my Genius, which was born for ſeverer exerciſes, will permit me to engage.

But now to wind up all after ſo tedious a Letter, I muſt conclude with my ſad regrates, that we are brought to ſuch a paſs, that diſcourſes of this kind find ſuch acceptance among us. The Patient is in a high diſtemper, when he loaths wholeſome food; and longs after every fantaſtical *quelque choſe* he hears of: So it is indeed to be lamented, that the beſt compoſures that do either inform or edifie the Reader are neglected, and if any thing gets vent, that tends to make the moſt ſacred things grow cheap, and fall in contempt, it is bought up at any rate, and read with an inſatiable itch. I wiſh the Authour of that diſcourſe may with ſerious and deep reflections, conſider

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what he has done in this work of his; he has made all the enemies of Peace triumph, and has put some popular things in the mouths of his Readers, with which they think themselves sufficiently armed to baffle both the Articles and Rules of our Church. I am confident he is so serious and so sincere a man, that when ever he is made sensible of this, he will be very ready to take out of the way any scandal which these his conceptions have brought forth.

In fine, I pray God teach us to know the things that belong to our Peace, that so our animosities and heart-burnings being laid aside we may all study to seek *the things that belong to Peace, and the things whereby we may edifie one another.* If I have wearied out your patience with a long Epistle, I was forced to it, by the subject you commanded me to write about. And yet I have done it as short as was possible: which has made me overlook many lesser errours in that discourse, which were not of such general concern, but discover how easily that Writer takes many things upon trust. It was needless to amuse the World with these particulars, and I am more a *Friend* and *Honourer* of that *Author*, than to engage with him meerly out of humour, to contend with him, or to expose him, least of all to make a needless show of reading. But I will make an end.

London, May the 23.
1676.

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FINIS.